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AUTHOR McFadden, Mark G.
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the perceptions and interactions of disadvantaged young people returning to mainstream education through Street Kids Access Tertiary Education (SKATE), a university bridging program in Sydney, Australia. Although both males and females in the study shared common backgrounds of disadvantage, "second-chance" educational success was differentially distributed in females' favor. Generally, males' constructions of educational identity, formed during previous educational experiences, went unconstructed throughout the program. They continued to focus on what they lacked to be an educational success. By contrast, females shared strategies of commitment and negotiated reconstructed educational identities. They focused on how education was developing them as people. Using Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (1996), Giddens's theory of structuration (1984), and Walker's theory of intercultural articulation (1993), this study illustrates how the SKATE program recycled disadvantage for a majority of males and provided access for a relatively disproportionate number of females. Reflecting on the work of Willis (1977), the paper demonstrates how the unintentional consequences of everyday educational practices can perpetuate the situation of already disadvantaged individuals. (Included are an abstract and 32 references.) (MLH)

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Boys and 'Second Chance' Education: Same jeans different consequences.

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Mark G. McFadden, Charles Sturt University
Bathurst, NSW, 2795
Australia
mmcfadden@csu.edu.au

Abstract

The Street Kids Access Tertiary Education (SKATE) study examined the perceptions and interactions of disadvantaged young people returning to mainstream education through a university bridging program in Sydney, Australia. While both males and females in the study shared common backgrounds of disadvantage, 'second chance' educational success was differentially distributed in favour of females. For the most part, males' constructions of educational identity, formed during previous educational experiences, went unreconstructed throughout the program. They continued to focus on what it was they lacked to be an educational success. By contrast, females were able to share strategies of commitment and to negotiate reconstructed educational identities. They focused on the way that education was developing them as people. Using Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1996), Giddens's theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and Walker's theory of intercultural articulation (Walker 1993), this study illustrates the way that the SKATE program recycled disadvantage for a majority of males and provided access to opportunity for a relatively disproportionate number of females. Reflecting on the work of Willis (1977), the paper demonstrates how the unintentional consequences of everyday practices in educational sites can lead to the continued disadvantage of those in already disadvantaged positions, in this case for males.

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> If we examine the structure of the context of reproduction we can observe that it is constituted by categories (agents, discourses and sites) and practices. The categories constitute an expression of its social division of labour, and the practices are the expressions of the social relations of communication (Bernstein & Diaz, 1984: 63).

Introduction

This paper explores the perceptions and interactions of 'second chance' education students returning to mainstream education through the Street Kids Access Tertiary Education (SKATE) program, including their previous life experiences, their need for support, and gender differentiated program outcomes.[1] All students in the program had experienced previous life and educational disadvantage and were returning to education in an attempt to change the emotional, social and material circumstances of their lives. In all, there were twenty-seven students involved in the research over a two-year period; fourteen females and thirteen males all of whom shared similar stories of disadvantage. Previous research on educational response has tended to focus exclusively on males or females in particular social settings (see, for example Willis, 1977; Moran, 1988; Walker, 1988; and McRobbie, 1991). This research provided an opportunity to analyse the educational response of both males and females from disadvantaged backgrounds within the same social and cultural setting. The students' ages ranged from seventeen years through to twenty-eight with the average age being nineteen. Their lives prior to the program were characterised by early school leaving, lack of stable home situation, lack of parental support, emotional and/or physical abuse, poor self-concept, poor health and substance abuse.

Many of the individuals who entered SKATE did not make it to the end. Clearly, a range of institutional, social and personal pressures were operating on these people which resulted in their early leaving. It was also clear that some people left because they continued to see education as inappropriate. However, rather than focusing exclusively on those individuals who continued to experience education as a constraint, as in many previous studies (see Riseborough, 1993), this research examined the beliefs, attitudes and actions of those people who it can be argued were relative success stories. These people struggled on to the end of their particular program and many achieved what they set out to do in the short term; that is, access higher education, which, it can be argued, is a significant gateway to educational and life opportunity.

In this context, and a significant finding of the research, was the way in which females were much more likely to make it to the end of the SKATE course than were males. Of the fourteen students who 'made it to higher education' through SKATE, ten were female and four were male. While on the basis of numbers alone, it is extremely problematic to generalise from a sample such as this, the research also told a fascinating story about the way in which cultural groups formed within the institutional research site and how group membership became an indicator and predictor of likely program success. The more successful cultural group, the

[1] As a postscript to this paper, on 13 November 1997, the university, in Sydney, Australia, at which the SKATE program operated announced that funding would not be available to continue the program after 1997.

Committeds, were exclusively female, while a group called the Leisure Ones, a much less successful group, was largely made up of males. A few of the females on the fringe of this group were able to access success. A group called the Drop Ins was almost exclusively male and no student from this group was successful in the program.[2] Another fascinating finding of the research was the way in which these groups expressed preference for certain institutional sites, for example, the Committeds for the classroom and/or lunchroom, and for the Leisure Ones, the bar, because it was in these sites group members felt most 'comfortable' and secure.

Table 1 summarises the different characteristics of the groups mentioned above, using their attendance, lunchtime site preference, and after class hours site preferences as a basis for comparison. There are other more complex ways in which the members of the groups can be described, principally in their language about the program and the way in which they see the relationship between it and themselves.

TABLE 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE COURSE[3]

The Committeds	The Leisure Ones	The Drop Ins
Regular uni attenders	Regular uni attenders	Irregular uni attenders
Preference for lunchroom	Preference for bar	Some in bar/lunchroom
Rarely, if ever, go to bar	Visit bar outside class	Visit bar outside class
Rarely, if ever, go to gym	May visit gym/play sport	Rarely visit gym
Regular class attenders	Become irregular class attenders	Irregular class attenders
Exclusively female	Mix of females and males	Almost all males

In beginning to map the processes and practices that lead to reproduced disadvantage for a greater proportion of males than females in the study, this paper takes a discursive approach (Hall, 1997). Such an approach is concerned with the effects and consequences of cultural practices, that is, its politics, including language, and how language and representation produce meaning for different cultural groups. It examines, 'how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things', for example, education, 'are represented, thought about [and] practiced' (Hall, 1997: 6).

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[2] These group names were drawn from language the students used about themselves.

[3] This particular characterisation applies to the 1993 group but can also be applied to the 1992 group. The gendered nature of the sub-groups was not as dramatically marked in 1992 but was still a very visible feature of course outcomes.

Theoretical and Conceptual Issues

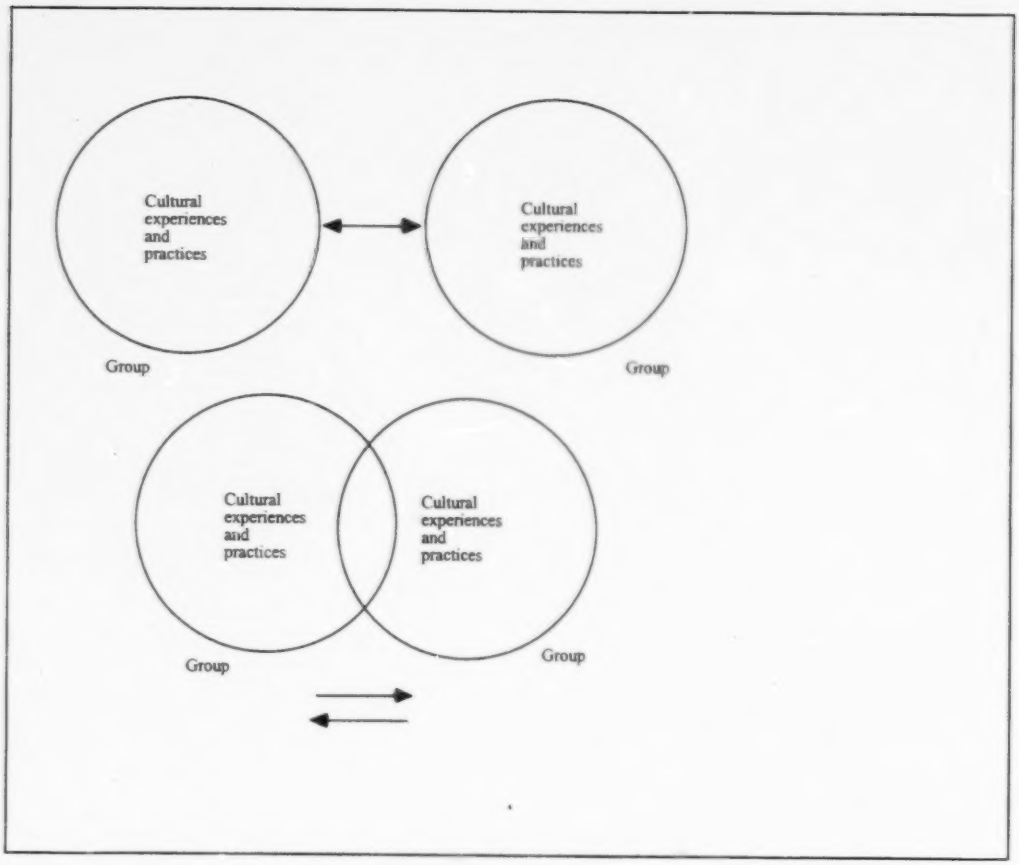
I have argued previously that Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, and the related concepts of classification and framing, can enable us to think clearly about the way in which the site of education can be used either to access opportunity or to 'recycle' disadvantage; that is, to enable change or to continue to constrain individuals (see McFadden, 1996). Giddens's theory of structuration has important links with the work of Bernstein, particularly in helping to conceptualise the role that previous experiences of education, deployed through constructions of identity, have on the 'second chance' (McFadden, 1995b). I have also argued that the way in which personal and educational identity is implicated in the continued disadvantage of individuals is undertheorised. Educational identities, formed during previous educational experiences, are deployed as a resource by people attempting to reaccess mainstream education. It is clear that programs of 'second chance' education either confirm, or allow the reconstruction, of these educational identities (McFadden, 1995a). The question at issue in this paper is why, in the SKATE program, the educational identities of males went largely unreconstructed and why females, on the whole, were more able to view educational possibility in a very different way.

How this might occur is illustrated in Figure 1 which represents diagrammatically the way in which groups can be kept apart by cultural divergence, or brought together through intercultural articulation (Walker, 1993) by focusing on culturally convergent experience. First, however, remember the formation of the cultural groups in the program: the Committeds, the Leisure Ones and the Drop Ins. Second, consider the finding that these groups expressed preferences for certain institutional sites. Finally, reflect on the gender distribution of the groups and their relative success in the program. Now, consider the diagram. The first two circles indicate how groups can be constrained by their own cultural resources. The circles which overlap on common ground indicate how the cultural resources of different groups can become available to other groups and can be shared. The crucial element in intercultural articulation then is the search for the common ground, or touchstone (appearing here as the common area of the lower two circles in figure 1) which allows the sharing of cultural resources to take place.

The notion of intersection is important to consider here. If, for whatever reason, the program does not allow this kind cultural articulation or intersection to occur, or if it is constrained and limited, different cultural groups are unlikely to share their practices. But there is another aspect to intersection to consider. As Willis (1977) has argued, the intersection of cultures in the school achieved, for education 'one of its main though misrecognised objectives - the direction of a proportion of working kids "voluntarily" to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual work' (p178). Social action, Willis (1977) said, could operate in contradictory and unintended ways:

> ... cultural forms of adaption of the institution's clients ... interacts with the practical exigencies and processes of the institution as they strike them. One of the important variants of this is likely to be an oppositional informal culture which may well actually help to accomplish the wider social reproduction which the official policy has been trying to defeat or change (pp177-178).

FIGURE 1 THE OPERATION OF INTERCULTURAL ARTICULATION



It is possible that the intersection of cultures in the SKATE program achieved a certain kind of outcome by unintentionally encouraging the development of an oppositional or resistant culture, almost exclusively male, and that this led to unequal educational outcomes (see McFadden & Walker 1997 for an overview of resistance theory). This is certainly an interesting perspective given the present policy concern about rates of male participation in education and training (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 1998). Before an analysis of the likelihood of this possibility, or that of constrained intercultural articulation, I want first to examine the previous life experiences that the students brought with them to the program.

Previous Lives

The students in SKATE brought remarkably similar backgrounds of disadvantage to the program. The family backgrounds which they had were best characterised by instability, lack of support, conflict and sexual, physical and emotional abuse. These characteristics were neither class nor gender specific, although the females in the program were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than were the males. The most common characteristic that the families of students shared was parental

separation. For the most part separation occurred when the students were quite young although they continued to carry the consequences of this separation with them.

Although some students reported degrees of rapprochement with members of their families, there was an overwhelming sense of lack of parental support within the group and also of any sense of belonging in the families from which they came. The students brought with them to the SKATE program experiences of various kinds and levels of violence and abuse, which occurred, for the most part, in their own homes. The sexual, physical and emotional abuse reported by students knew no class boundaries and was regulated by gender in terms of the number of female students who had experienced sexual abuse. Only one male reported instances of sexual abuse in the family. More often reported by males was physical abuse. Far more females reported emotional abuse than did males and the domestic violence that students described was often associated with alcohol abuse.

Drugs and alcohol played a significant part in the life stories of many of the students. The lifestyle and social connections associated with the use of both drugs and alcohol was often seen as attractive to people when they could find no sense of love, belonging or protection in their own family. 'Fitting in' with a social group and 'having fun' were driving forces behind initial excursions into drug and alcohol use. Such excursions often became habitual and for many students soon boring, fraught with 'trouble', and destructive rather than constructive. Keeping free from drugs and alcohol, modifying their use, or at least alleviating the destructive effects of their abuse, become key goals in the lives of students for whom drugs and alcohol have been recognised as being a significant factor in a problem filled lifestyle.

Almost to a person, the students with a history of alcohol and drug abuse expressed a realisation, after a time, of pointlessness and boredom that is directly associated with a lifestyle which has substance abuse as a central and defining element. What was once fun becomes boring, what was once a social group often becomes a forum for physical and/or sexual abuse, and what was once purposeful becomes aimless.

> Sarah: I just hardly left the bedroom, never went out, never socialised, and that was when it started getting bad and that was when I started um, just really hating myself and really hating my life. (...) I was aware at the time that it was really boring.

Drugs, alcohol and their abuse also often led to extremely dire consequences like prostitution, crime and, in the experience of some, death.[4]

For the majority of students living in family homes prior to being on the streets or in need of alternative accommodation provided at least a stable roof over their heads. The most common response to needing accommodation immediately after leaving the family home was a sense of material instability, often at odds with feelings of control

[4] This is not to suggest that all students who use drugs and enjoy alcohol with friends experience such dire consequences. On balance, the majority of students continue to enjoy a drink and see their drug use as social, recreational, and controllable. Many, for instance, talked freely about their attendance at blues and bar nights held at the university and their drug and alcohol intake there. But this was not seen by these students as a problem of abuse (* 19/8/93 and * 20/8/93).

that some students reported on leaving home. Alex, a female, describes this instability in general terms.

> Alex: It means that um ... you have no support network from anyone um ... and you just sort of make ends meet any way that you can and ... um like you don't really have any friends, you don't have any family, you just don't have anything, so you just sort of get by how you can.

For a few others, like Don, life on the streets and in refuges was just an extension of the instability and lack of control associated with normal family accommodation. For all students though, the need for 'somewhere to stay' led them on a cycle of search beginning firstly with friends and often ending in some form of supported accommodation or, in a few cases, back to the family home.

In terms of this study 'educational disadvantage', as the students described it, was the category of description where the factors of unstable homelife, lack of permanent and stable accommodation, and lack of familial support interacted. Unstable homelives, lack of family support or instability in the family, and, after leaving home, lack of stable accommodation all contributed to students reporting problems of one kind or another at school. Students remembered being 'unable to study', unable 'to retain anything', 'not concentrating on concentrating', being 'disruptive', they remembered 'truanting' or 'jigging school', 'falling behind', 'just not being stable'. The way schools treated the emotional fragility of these students is perhaps best captured by Eleanor in this powerful indictment of her schooling.

> Eleanor: School was a waste of time for me.
>
> MMcF: What was a waste of time about it?
>
> Eleanor: Well, instead of being encouraged to do well, and to use it to my benefit, I think I was destroyed as a person through school. (...) For instance through my behaviour, like being raped and what not, and all this anger, instead of dealing with it, I was sort of broken more, in a sense, you know, but I was expressing emotions which were not accepted.
>
> MMcF: So are you saying that the sort of anxiety you were feeling there wasn't supported?
>
> Eleanor: No, it was, um, how can I put this ... it was punishable!

'Conventional' schools were seen as places of 'control' and 'conformity', places where there were 'no compromises'. They were also seen as places where the problems which students framed in response to the constraints under which they lived were not addressed. For many students 'moving from school to school' was a major

problem in the instability they felt. For many of them, problems at school and home led to early school leaving. For both males and females, early leaving was also closely associated with 'getting too far behind', getting too much of a 'bad time' from teachers, being under too much emotional pressure, being dissatisfied with the relevance of the system, and not having 'any money' to continue in school after leaving home. This last reason illustrates how lack of system knowledge can work against homeless young people.

Alex: I tried to stay at school for as long as I could but I just couldn't stay there because ...

MMcF: Now why was that?

Alex: I didn't have any money. I didn't have enough money to pay rent and that kind of stuff. And I was pretty, I mean I must have been a pretty dumb child because I didn't know that I could actually get Austudy, 'cause my mum actually earnt too much, but as a homeless child I could have got Austudy.

MMcF: So you weren't aware of that?

Alex: Yeah. And I didn't know about refuges, I didn't know any of that.

The consequences of early leaving for the majority of these students was, as Sean illustrated, low skill employment, or unemployment, and a sense of not fitting in to the social mainstream.

Sean: (...) basically, I left [school] ... and got a job for about a month and then ...

MMcF: What were you doing?

Sean: Um, worked at Woolworths. And then I just got sick of that and left and then just kept on running amok for about a year, year and a half.

MMcF: Now, the running amok meant, means what? Means?

Sean: ... Doing graffiti, stealing, taking drugs. Just not what normal people do. Not getting a job, having a house, doing all that.

Sean, like the other SKATE students, judged his lifestyle against a 'normal' other, who, in his eyes, did what he did not do, that is, work and have stable accommodation, and did not do what he did, that is, steal, take drugs and do graffiti.

Educational Responses

Many students made direct links to their family situation in accounting for behaviour at school which they described as 'disruptive'. Both males and females talked about trying to be 'cool' at school to cover emotional damage. Larry, for example, lived in Melbourne, left home and came to Sydney, starting school again after getting settled in a refuge. Tess, left the private school she attended after leaving home and was referred to a government high school by youth workers at the refuge where she found accommodation. Larry talked about 'developing cool about being brainy smart' when he came to Sydney; brainy smart being the way he described his school attitude in Melbourne. Tess, 'tried to be really 'cool' to impress other kids in the refuge after leaving a private school and 'discovering' the relative freedom of a government high school. Being 'cool', for both Larry and Tess, was about using the school context to satisfy emotional and social needs. The school context, and particularly for Larry and Tess, changing school contexts, added a further layer of complexity in these students' struggle to negotiate the material and emotional circumstances of their lives.

All students in the program reached a 'turning point' in their lives at which time education became a viable option for them. All but a small number of students talked about not only wanting 'something to do' with their life but having something 'better' to do than 'being on the dole', 'having a cleaning job', 'just working in a shop' or 'just sitting at home'. Some had tried the '9 to 5 mundane' and were looking to education to give them something which would allow them to 'get on with life' and aim for a goal. For some, involvement in education and training programs run by agencies like the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) or community organisations like the YWCA, had already convinced them that they had some potential for further study.

For both males and females, schooling, and education more generally, had left them with such negative perceptions of themselves as learners that when they got an opportunity at a second chance an overriding motivation was to prove, either to themselves, their teachers in absentia, or their families, that if they suddenly had the potential then surely they also had 'it' back then when the system failed them. The 'it' that the students wanted to prove they could both 'do' and had is bound up with educational success. 'It' carries powerful images of self-advancement, security, independence, intelligence, commitment and determination, and personal satisfaction. In the final analysis, being able to do 'it' helps defines what type of individual you are.

SKATE was seen by the students as 'a good alternative' to school and TAFE (Technical and Further Education) for a number of reasons. The majority of students were referred to SKATE through youth workers at refuges and welfare agencies. Particularly at refuges, the students had usually heard stories or knew someone who 'had made it' through SKATE. There had also been front-page newspaper publicity and prime time radio reportage about program successes both on the highest rating Sydney AM station and the national ABC FM youth station. The students believed that there would be others in the program like themselves. They not have to pay for the program. For many, this was a major factor in deciding to come. Also, the one year program length was attractive to people who believed they had wasted enough

time already. Going through TAFE for these people meant at least two years before access to university was a possibility.

What the students in this study wanted to do in their working lives was not so different from a list that might have been constructed with a group of young people in any number of schools or communities throughout Australia: social worker, teacher, lawyer, nurse, psychologist, systems analyst, chef, graphic artist, photographer, flight attendant, actor. Very few had no sense of direction at all and a small number of other students wanted first to travel before finally settling on a chosen area of work; again not so different from any group of young people anywhere in Australia (DEET, 1993). But there was a realism at work in their comments about aspirations that reflected the number of times things had not worked out in the past. Being realistic but not defeatist was in many ways a form of protection.

Eleanor: I want to study. If I can't get in to, if I don't get accepted by uni, I'll try a tech. If I don't get accepted by tech, then I'll look at further study of some sort.

Glen: I applied to get into Newcastle University, to do creative arts and design and if I don't get into that then I'll just have to, um, get a job and get money next year.

Rose: I've applied for Visual Arts, and I'm not overly hopeful about getting in to one of these courses, but like you know, I've got a chance.

As well as having quite conventional occupational aspirations the students had similarly conventional lifestyle aspirations, the most common being to be independent and off welfare. This contradicts the oft-quoted public and media perception of young people trapped in welfare state bred inertia. Again, these long-term aspirations are similar to those of the vast majority of Australian young people (Smith, 1994).

Luke: I hope I'll be happy, have a safe place to live, a constant place to live, um a bit of security, um travel.

Kate: Be off the pension and working, have some stability hopefully (...) so that I can put everything behind me and get on with my life. I've got time.

Mick: In a private house, you know, not in a housing commission place. Um, in a sort of private house,

> you know, the usual house where you're very independent, you don't have the government to subsidise your rent.

The overriding wish for the vast majority of SKATE students was stability. This was the ingredient that so many of these students saw as missing from their lives and the thing from which they saw stemming the security and happiness of so many other people their age. They wanted a solid base from which to build a more satisfying and productive life.

Unequal Educational Outcomes

The SKATE students shared a range of similar backgrounds of disadvantage yet had success distributed unequally inside the program. This section of the paper explores the way in which the social relations and relations of knowledge production of SKATE led to different distributions of educational success. This exploration might help us to understand how SKATE, and similar second chance programs, could be changed to deliver success more equitably and to a greater proportion of participants, particularly to males.

A crucial issue to address as well in accounting for unequal educational outcomes is the relative roles of individuals, groups and systems. To explore this interaction Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse is used to make sense of and interpret the ethnographic data which the research generated. Although Giddens' theory of structuration helps focus attention on processes of communication, interpretation and signification within the SKATE program, and is useful for conceptualising the way in which students' previous experiences of education are deployed by them as a resource, or facility, in the second chance, it cannot deal adequately with the way in which different students with similar educational backgrounds achieve markedly different course outcomes.

There were a number of strategies that students used in succeeding within the course that linked individual commitment with the social context of the program and also with institutional constraints. For example, positive social relations were considered both important and necessary to a sense of 'belonging' within the program but were not seen by students as necessary and sufficient for program success. In actual fact, many students pointed to 'trying to fit in' with others as leading to the failure of peers and in some cases, to their own continued failure. Just as Wexler (1992) found, 'fitting in' and carving out a social identity for SKATE students was an important exercise in identity production. However, just as the process of 'fitting in' had been socially important for students in the past, so had being 'influenced'. They were linked processes. Students expressed the outcomes of 'influence' as either positive or negative, good or bad. Regardless of the group with which the students chose to associate, their sense of belonging was one of the factors that kept them engaged with the program. However, many students in the program made decisions to come to the university but choose to go to the bar and be with their friends rather than go to class. This was the type of consequence of 'influence' that eventually led to further disadvantage.

The Second Chance – real or ritual?

Second chance educational discourse is an accepted and well-documented feature of current educational systems (Inbar, 1990; Ayalon, Shapira & Shavit, 1992; Yogev, 1994). It therefore operates at a state level and is recontextualised at both an institutional and program level (Bernstein, 1996). Second chance education is associated with the disruption of established patterns of educational response for 'marginal groups' by providing 'alternative routes' to educational success (Yogev, 1994: 5366), and is bound up with notions of equal opportunity, 'constant encouragement' (Ayalon, Shapira & Shavit, 1992: 508), and the provision of flexible, caring and non-threatening learning environments (Inbar, 1990). Inbar (1990) differentiates between 'ritualistic' second chance systems, which are 'characterized by a clear disconnection between their announced goals and their actual outputs', and 'real' systems offering a 'genuine full' second chance (pp13-14).

SKATE recontextualised the system discourse of the second chance at both an institutional and classroom level. At the program level, it was recontextualised in the discourse of care, a construct that has been the subject of much recent work in education, particularly in relation to the education of disadvantaged groups (Phelan, Yu & Davidson, 1994; Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson & Schaps, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Cumming, 1996; National Commission on Education, 1996).[5] However, for the majority of students, and especially for males, the recontextualised discourse of the program takes on, in most classes, the general appearance of a performance mode of education, that is, one based on established criteria or the norms of educational attainment often associated with school education. As Cazden (1988) would say, the pattern across the course reflected the 'unmarked' or 'default' pattern of pedagogic discourse so prevalent in educational institutions of teacher initiated instruction, student response and teacher evaluation (p53). In Bernstein's (1996) terms, the curriculum is strongly framed. Even though the discourse of care underpinned the approach taken, the strongly framed contexts of most of the classrooms emphasised teacher control and the content of the curriculum rather than the needs of the students to make connections with this content through their prior experience and by the use of their own language.

Classrooms are places where 'social stratification occurs through speech and text-related transactions of learners and teachers and where 'institutional biographies' help to 'shape' students' life chances' (Florio-Ruane, 1994: 797-798). Classroom discourse both 'embodies the structure and authority relations of schooling and routinely recreates them' (Florio-Ruane, 1994: 799). This focus on the structuring practices of classroom discourse is necessary to help determine why the SKATE program leads to success for many female students and continued failure for others, particularly males. Bernstein (1996) states that pedagogical discourse is essentially empty and is constituted by discourses appropriated from other fields. Pedagogical discourse, he says, is constituted by an instructional discourse embedded in a regulative, or dominant, discourse, and in this sense, it is one discourse which appears as two.

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[5] The National Commision of Education (1996) associates the ethos of care with Christian values. It is interesting to note that in an interview with the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the university in which the SKATE program runs, he referred to the program as having, 'an overlay of Christian values'.

What became clear from the study was the way that some students in the course understood more clearly than others the way in which the discourse of care was the regulative discourse of the program. For many students, particularly the males, the discourse of care remained invisible and they continued to read the program in a performance mode, thus experiencing pedagogic tensions and confusions; including teaching/learning outcomes not fitting with expectations, and pedagogic practices not fitting with stated intentions. For example, students thinking in terms of performance see the consequences of their, on the whole self-chosen, absence from the classroom as irretrievable because they find themselves 'too far behind' and with 'too much to catch up on'. They read this situation in terms of threat rather than need for support. And so, rather than approach teachers for help, they choose to stay away from the classroom. To go back into the classroom would only lead to further discomfort, especially in classes like law, where framing is always strong, particularly in relation to pacing of curriculum content. Kash explained, on separate occasions, why he preferred to stay away from class in the following way.

Kash: ... I've got these heavy assignments that I'm trying to catch up on. I'm also trying to get all the notes I've missed out on and I'm getting all that shit together. It just takes time that's all (* 19/8/93).

Kash: Oh man, I've just had piles and piles of assignments, like law. I don't want to go in there knowing nothing, you know (* 7/10/93).

Certain pedagogic practices are seen in opposition to both the notion of care that is said to underpin the program, and also to a performance mode of education, which leads to disappointment, disenchantment and, eventually, to dropping out. Don explains his reaction to seeing two of the teachers arguing about being unprepared for a teaching session.

Don: ... I don't see any teamwork between the teachers and there's a lot of incidences throughout the year where I haven't been happy with the fact that there hasn't been teamwork, and then I loose respect for the teacher in the first place and I don't learn from them.

MMcF: Can you give me any examples of a lack of teamwork or things that have made you frustrated?

Don: Well, one teacher asked another what they were going to be doing, and then another said, 'Oh look don't worry just go on,' and that teacher became frustrated. And that happened in front of all of us. I don't really want to say which teacher it was, but it was very obviously um ...

MMcF: What was very obvious to you about that?

Don: Well, that there was no teamwork and that there was no particular ... not just teamwork, but there was no ... no commitment, to um ... I think that squashed all the hope that I had ... just that one particular incident.

In this case, Don was confronted with a semiotic message about the program which he found uncomfortable and unacceptable because it conflicted with what he understood to be the intent of the program. Don expected teachers to be organised and committed in helping him to achieve his goal of attending university, and while he actually saw teachers as, on the whole, willing to help, this one incident affected his perception of the whole program.

Gendered Sites and Discourses

Regardless of the reasons behind disjunctions in relation to the program, their consequences are played out in group contexts. The students who feel comfortable in the classroom associate with others who feel similarly comfortable and those who, for whatever reason, begin to see class as irrelevant, associate with others of like mind in the bar (see McFadden, 1996 for a detailed discussion). The choices within the SKATE program came down to being associated with the group that was 'committed', being in the group that was 'cool' and focused on leisure, or being a loner and social isolate. Very few students were able to negotiate membership of both the major groups. The evidence in this study suggests that, as Walker (1988) found, different groups are differentially positioned within the educational site in relation to the institution's culture, or in Bernstein's terms, the regulative pedagogic discourse. In this case, the differentiation seems clearly marked along gender lines.

It is possible that males in this study, in their efforts to remain 'cool guys' (Connell, 1993: 197), make a claim to another source of power, the site of the bar, when the classroom ceases to be an option for the expression of their power. As Connell (1987) argues, the dominant masculine form of heterosexuality, power, aggression, superiority and rationality is constructed in relation to and against a feminine form of otherness. Stevens (1995) notes that the discourse of caring is often associated with notions of dependence, weakness and softness, in other words, as feminine. In addition, Mac an Ghaill (1994) has referred to educational institutions as 'masculinizing' agencies where males are positioned subjectively within gendered discourses.

Recent work by Bernstein (1996) on individual 'repertoires' and group 'reservoirs' of practice allows a conceptualisation of how previous educational experiences continue to influence educational encounters, and also the way in which the practices and discourses of groups within educational sites are implicated in either constraining or enabling individual group members, that is, in offering the potential for change or in closing it off. Early in the program, by sheer weight of numbers and forcefulness, and drawing on their reservoir of strategies about 'how to be cool' those students who would eventually become aligned to the Leisure Ones appropriated classroom time and space, and attempted to control the pedagogic device. As the 'game' of controlling the classroom became 'boring' and less of a challenge, and as many students

experienced difficulties outside the program - particularly with accommodation - and dropped out, the number of Leisure Ones regularly turning up to class also dropped off. They felt more 'comfortable' at the bar.

The change in nature of the total group allowed the Committeds, and particularly those on the periphery of this group, to realise the discourse of 'commitment' and 'determination' within the regulative and instructional discourses of the classroom. It also resulted in some teachers weakening the framing of the classroom enabling the group to share more openly their repertoires of committed strategies. Those now outside the classroom, although at the educational site, did not get to share in this display about how to succeed. The educational context did not allow what Bernstein (1996) terms, 'the circulation of strategies and their exchange' (p17), rather, students were isolated in the sites where they felt most 'comfortable'. Bernstein (1996) explains that ...

> context specific strategies construct a potential reservoir that can enhance individual repertoires under conditions of social interaction with weak or absent distributive rules (p181).

and also that ...

> Isolation of members is not an effective social base for the development of either reservoir or repertoire (p181).

In this study, individuals in both groups were adding to their repertoires of social and discursive practice, but only one group was doing so in a way which was likely to give them access to academic success. The circulation and exchange of strategies of success was restricted to the Committeds, the social relations of the classroom and the institutional site impeding the access of the Leisure Ones. In this way, success was distributed unequally within the program as its pedagogical relations enabled one group, in particular, more opportunity to access the academic discourse of the classroom.

Conclusion

Sites like the bar maintain the separateness that appears in the discourse of the SKATE students, but the classroom as a site is also implicated in this separation. Like sites, groups can be strongly classified, the boundaries between them never meeting. In this sense, there is no possibility of intercultural articulation because there are no points of culture which, on the surface, appear to meet. Strongly framed classrooms reinforce the strong classifications of groups. What is seen as power and control in the different sites never meets and never informs the different groups about the relative benefits on offer in each site. The discourse of 'cool' which regulates the social relations of the Leisure Ones is classified out of the classroom. The discourse of 'commitment' which regulates the social relations of the Committeds is classified out of sites like the bar. The internal framing of each site is not understood by the groups that are classified out of, or on the margins of, the other site. It is difference that stands out.

The sites become metaphors for the interests of the students, and sadly, indicators of their potential success. In essence, the practices of each group remain foreign to the other and the possibilities for intercultural articulation are lost. The Leisure Ones, for instance, never really 'hear' the discourse about goals, determination, commitment, and options. The Committeds never 'hear' the discourse about relaxation, socialising, and games. But the research clearly indicates that each group, as to some extent do the teachers, understands deeply a common language about the need for support, encouragement and opportunity, doubt and insecurity, the need for stability, fears in relation to commitment and possible success, pain and suffering, and survival. The students also understand the need for social relations and fun. These are all points of possible meeting and intercultural articulation.

In SKATE more females experienced success than did males. While the process of achieving this success is not entirely clear, this paper suggests that the unequal distribution of educational success may be related to the way in which males are positioned to see discourses of care as feminine, and therefore, inappropriate for their access to academic knowledge. In addition, males in this study often misread the discourse of the program in terms of performance rather than care, that is, they focused on what they continue to lack, rather than on their potential for growth within the program. What it means to be male and female at the present time was not addressed specifically in this research nor was the influence of popular culture on the way in which students become gendered and positioned within SKATE and in education more generally. These issues need to be further explored and used in the construction of appropriate pedagogy. From this study it is clear that the development of pedagogic strategies to distribute success more equitably must focus on the construction of shared strategies for success developed in a spirit of caring and help, rather than perceived control. It would seem from this study that change, which leads to improved, or more satisfying life outcomes for all students, begins with a recognition of the commonalities in students' backgrounds, a focus on their shared hopes and desires for the future, and a shared commitment to encouraging success for all.

Key to transcripts

[ ]	Background information
...	Pause
(...)	Material edited out
___	Transcription from different section of the interview or from different interview follows
*	From field notes

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'The Goal'

Each life converges to some centre
Expressed or still;
Exists in every human nature
A goal,

Admitted scarcely to itself, it may be,
Too fair
For credibility's temerity
To dare

(Emily Dickenson, quoted in Greene, 1990: 45)